Sustainability Success Story

Water-filling Stations at Zion National Park

Zion National Park receives more than 2.7 million visitors a year and park visitors are encouraged to carry and drink enough water to prevent heat related illness in the hot and arid summer environment. Many people are accustomed to purchasing bottled water and immediately disposing of the empty container. Zion's recycling program was overwhelmed with disposable plastic bottles that have little or no recycling potential or market value. While recycling has become a popular alternative to simply discarding waste into landfills and affords many with a feel good attitude in doing their part to limit our contribution to



global warming, recycling is still the most consumptive side of the "3R" triangle. The recycling process depends on transportation and market values, and many products ultimately end up in the landfill after, and sometimes before, they are recycled.

The more sustainable option, embraced by Zion, is to provide water bottle filling stations at the park. A truly sustainable approach to reducing waste encourages visitors to drink from reusable water bottles. In coordination with its partners, the Zion Natural History Association and Xanterra Concessions, Zion has created a program to sell affordable, reusable water bottles while providing free "Zion Spring Water" at

filling stations at major stopping points – Zion Visitor Center, Zion Human History Museum and Zion Lodge. The filling stations also serve as exhibits, giving visitors information about the impact of disposable bottles, as well as the safety and purity of Zion's water and the importance of staying hydrated, especially in the desert. The end results are avoided waste and a learning opportunity for visitors.

The sales of reusable water bottles have increased 78 percent. It is estimated that the park has eliminated the annual sale of more than 60,000 bottles of water, which is the equivalent of 5,000 pounds of plastic not entering the waste stream.

Sustainability Outcomes and Other Benefits: Waste Reduction, Participation by Visitors, GHG Reduction, Fostering Stewardship Beyond Our Boundaries

